



14 May 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Coverage of Events in the Gulf of Thailand  
Prior to the Seizure of the Mayaguez

1. The first indication of a threat to shipping in the Gulf of Thailand was received by US operational forces on 4 May 1975. On that date, the USS GRIDLEY advised that it had received merchant ship communications reporting the capture of a Korean tanker by an "unidentified Communist ship" in an area in the general vicinity of Poulo Wai island (where the Mayaguez was subsequently captured). This report was immediately passed by the CINCPAC Intelligence Center to the NMCC which, in turn, immediately passed it to the CIA Operations Center. Because of CINCPAC's use of an "Address Indicator Group" (AIG 8724), it is safe to assume that its initial message also went to a large number of operational commands and intelligence centers within the Defense establishment. In any event, there is no evidence that anyone took any action on this report.

2. On 5 May, CINCPAC advised the NMCC (and other addressees) of a US news service report of the incident involving the Korean tanker. This report indicated a Cambodian Communist ship had fired upon, damaged, but failed to stop the Korean tanker. STATE/INR picked up this account of the news service report and a 5 May FBIS item from Seoul, which dealt with the same incident, and prepared a briefing paper for Mr. Hyland and Secretary Kissinger on the same day. No other element in the US intelligence community took any action.

3. On 6 May, the FBIS reported in its Daily Report that Seoul had advised the South Korean Ministry of Transportation to alert all Korean shipping to the dangers of Communist attacks "on the high seas of Cambodia."

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5. The seizure of the Mayaguez appears to have caught everyone by surprise. Neither CIA, DIA, nor the military services issued any report or analysis which would have indicated their consideration of a potential threat situation. No warning notices were issued.

6. The US agency responsible for issuing "notices to mariners" is the Hydrographic Center of the Defense Mapping Agency. There is no formal link between this agency and any current intelligence entity, and as far as we can ascertain at this juncture, intelligence concerning incidents in the Gulf of Thailand (2-12 May) was not sent to the Hydrographic Center\* by any element of the community.

\* A call from my office to the DOTA at 1835 Hrs. tonight was answered by a recording.

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[REDACTED]  
Daniel V. Wilson  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Deputy to the DCI for the  
Intelligence Community

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## ANNEX

Reports of Cambodian Communist  
Actions Against Foreign Shipping in the Gulf of Thailand

<u>DATE OF REPORT</u>	<u>DATE OF SEIZURE</u>	<u>VESSEL NATIONALITY</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
COMIPAC Message 041029Z	4 May	South Korean	Report from USS GRIDLEY that Korean tanker being captured by unidentified communist ship near Poulo Wai Island.
COMIPAC Message 051112Z	4 May (Same incident as above)	Same incident as above	Report by US News Service that a Cambodian communist ship fired upon but failed to stop Korean ship 200 n.m. S.E. of Thailand.
5 & 6 May FBIS Reports	4 May (Probably same incident as above)	South Korean (1 Vessel)	Seoul broadcasts reports of ship fired upon by communist boat. Official warning to all shipping of danger of attack "on the high seas of Cambodia."
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 240px; height: 250px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	2 May	Thai (7 Vessels)	Seized in what Cambodian Communists describe as "our" territorial waters. Capture includes 27 Thai seamen.
	2 May	South Vietnamese (2 Vessels)	Seized in what Cambodian Communists describe as "our" territorial waters. Also captured entire crew.
	6 May	"Chinese" (6 Vessels)	Cambodian Communists report that vessels were "fleeing from Saigon, headed toward Thailand." Vessels were taken to Cambodian mainland.

<u>DATE OF REPORT</u>	<u>DATE OF SEIZURE</u>	<u>VESSEL NATIONALITY</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
1	6 May	South Vietnamese	All seven persons on board reportedly executed by Cambodian Communists.
	7 May	Panamanian	94 Vietnamese/34 Thai on board. Master of vessel reported that vessel fired on without warning by Cambodian navy craft and detained 20 miles outside Poulo Wai, and also reported that the "new Cambodian boundary" had been extended 30 miles "outside" of Poulo Wai. (See Map.) Vessel departed Cambodian waters on 8 May.

